

world, the Presidential election, Middle East problems. It seems to me it would be to everyone's benefit to try to resolve some of the outstanding issues which are important at this stage only to Members who serve in Congress. I hope that is wrong, but it appears that is the case.

I repeat, for the third time today, the minority is willing and able to do whatever is possible to move these bills along to finality.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming is recognized.

COMPLETING THE WORK OF THE 106TH CONGRESS

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I, too, am anxious that we complete the work we have before us. We still have three important appropriations bills to put together. I hope we can deal with respect to the issues and move away from some of what has happened, where we have sought, in some cases, to make an issue more than to reach a solution.

In fairness to the Congress and to our associates, since Labor Day there has been a substantial amount of progress made. I will review some of it to assure you that we have been doing some very helpful and useful work.

For example, repeal of the telephone excise tax: This was a tax that was implemented during the Spanish-American War on telephones. I suspect it had exhausted itself by this time and finally was repealed.

The Safe Drug Reimportation Act, which, of course, is a part of a solution to pharmaceutical costs: In the case of Canada, for example, pharmaceuticals that are exported there are under price controls by the Government and therefore are less expensive than they are in the United States. This authorizes those drugs to be reimported and hopefully to be resold at a price less than what we have had in the United States. One of the issues is to ensure that those drugs are indeed bona fide and are indeed safe and will be the kinds of drugs that we would receive absent the reimportation.

Permanent normal trade relations with China: An interesting issue, one that is sometimes thought to be a big gift for China. The fact is, in terms of our trade with China, the restrictions they have had against our goods have been much greater than the restrictions we have had against theirs; in agriculture, for example, a 40-percent tariff on beef.

If this is implemented, we will have a reduction in the barriers for us to be shipping goods to China. We have had a good deal of discussion in some campaigns about trade and whether or not the effects of trade are valuable to the United States. Of course, about 40 percent of agricultural products are sold overseas. Obviously, those markets are very important to us, but we need to

ensure that it is done as fairly as can be and that we are treated well in this exchange. That, of course, is the reason for organizations such as WTO.

Legislation on H-1B visas was passed which allows for more high-tech people to enter this country to take jobs we are not able to fill. I think one of the very important things that goes with that is it emphasizes and funds some additional training for students in this country so that rather than hiring foreign people to fill these jobs, we will also be training people here to be hired for those jobs. I think that is terribly important.

We have done some things with the Children's Health Act; for instance, the Cancer Prevention Treatment Act, which is one bill that is particularly important to me. My wife is very involved in the Race For A Cure and doing things as to breast cancer.

The Rural Schools and Communities Health Determination Act is one that I think is very important. The real issue we have had on education in this Chamber has not been the amount of money the Federal Government spends but, rather, how it can be spent, and one of the obstacles has been that this administration has insisted that as the Federal money goes out, there are certain things tied to it that are required to be done. We on this side of the aisle have said, yes, we want to strengthen education, but we believe local educators, school boards, and State school departments should have the authority to make those kinds of decisions. Certainly, the needs in Wyoming are different from those in New York. So we certainly needed to do that, and we have indeed done that.

The Violence Against Women Act was an act we passed again so that it stays in effect, which is one of the most important aspects. We have done some things with the Water Resource Development Act, which is still in play but has been passed through this Congress. It has water development projects in it, the emphasis being on the Everglades. A good deal of authorization money is made available to the Everglades, which is one of our very important ecological activities.

NASA authorization and DOD authorization are continued, and we have done the Interior appropriations, which took into account some of the discussion involved with the CARA Act, but it didn't make it in defined spending—not with 15 years of mandatory spending, but it did provide additional funds for activities such as stateside parks and maintenance of Federal parks.

It was kind of disappointing to me when we received the budget from the administration. I happen to be chairman of the Parks Subcommittee. Despite our acknowledgment of the need for infrastructure for parks, the budget provided more money for acquisition of new parks than for the maintenance of

the parks we have now. So we need to make sure we deal with those issues.

We have had energy and water and Treasury-Postal.

My point is that we have done a great deal this year. Of course, there are always many more things to do. The issues that probably have dominated more time than anything are the issues that most people are concerned about, such as education. We talked about education for 5 weeks here this year. I have already indicated the different view. I was disappointed, frankly, in the way that progressed. We could have resolved that long ago. But the difference in view was on who has control of the spending, and it really was held up more as an issue for this election. That is too bad. I think we have a substantial amount of that taking place.

Social Security: It is interesting that Social Security now becomes one of the prime issues in the election—and indeed it should be. It is something that is extremely important to most everyone, of course. The proposal out there would ensure that those receiving benefits now would continue to receive them and those close to receiving benefits would have no change. But when you take a long look at Social Security, it is clear that unless something is done over time, then young people, such as these pages, who will pay taxes in their first paycheck, probably will not be able to line up for benefits. A change must be made.

It is interesting that that is one of the Presidential issues talked about the most. But during the past 8 years, really nothing has been done about it by this administration. That is interesting. The options, of course, are to do nothing or to try to make changes. One of the changes could be to increase taxes. That is not a very popular proposal. Reducing benefits is equally unpopular.

We can take a portion of those dollars and let them be in the account of people for themselves, let them invest it in the private sector and raise the return from about 2 percent to whatever it would be in the market, which would be substantially more than 2 percent. It is too bad that hasn't been changed. We have talked about keeping all the money there, and we are determined to do that. I think we have had five or six votes on a lockbox. All of that has been turned down because it seemed to be more important at that point to make an issue rather than find a solution.

We have had a good deal of discussion over a Patients' Bill of Rights, of course. We have had it before a conference committee. The Presiding Officer is a leader in that, and he has worked very hard to find a solution. But really, it turns on a relatively singular issue, and that is, where do you go with your appeal? Some would like

to go directly to court. Others of us would like to see in the interim a professional medical person be able to make those choices, and make them quickly, rather than the trial lawyers. So that has been a difficult issue.

Tax relief is something that, of course, is very important to all people. I find a lot of folks in Wyoming who are very interested in the repeal of the estate tax because we have lots of farms, ranches, and small businesses which people have spent their lives developing. The estate tax comes along and pretty well wipes out the profits they have made on efforts that have already been taxed. We passed that measure and the marriage penalty repeal. The marriage penalty clearly needed to be repealed. It provided that two people, singly, on the same salary, paid less taxes than they would if they were married. That isn't right. These, of course, were both vetoed by the President. So we didn't solve those issues. They are still there to be considered.

So I think in many ways we have had a very successful session. The amount of activity by the Congress is not always the measurement of success. I am one who believes there ought to be a limited role in the Federal Government and that that role is reasonably well defined, of course, in the Constitution. This is a United States of America. The implication, and I believe the better purpose, was for a limited role of the Federal Government. Obviously, there are things that are very appropriate—not only appropriate, but necessary—for the Federal Government to do.

On the other hand, I find as I move around in my State more and more people are saying, wait a minute, there are a lot of things here the Federal Government is involved in that it need not be involved. This economy that we have, which has been good to us over the last 12, 13 years, is a result of people being able to do things for themselves in the private sector, being able to have more of their own money to invest, using their initiative to compete.

So I think we ought to really examine in each of our minds what we think the role of the Federal Government ought to be and where we want to be over a period of time with respect to the division of power among the Federal Government, State governments, local governments and, most of all, of individuals. And then, as we move forward through all these programs, we ought to measure those things against that goal and see if, indeed, they are the kinds of things that contribute to the attainment of the way we see it.

Are there different views about that? Of course. There are people who believe the Federal Government should be involved in many things, and we have seen over the last decade sort of a turn to the Federal Government on most every issue that arises. We have found that the Federal Government is not the best place to resolve many things.

I don't mean to be in opposition to better government; certainly the role of defense; no one else can do that; interstate types of things we have to do; research we have to do. But there is a measure of balance that we should have.

I am hopeful as we complete this year and move into another cycle after this year that we can take time to really evaluate where we want to go and where we want to be when it is over.

I look forward to a very productive week. I, too, hope we are able to put together our packages and over the period of the next 3 days come to some conclusions. I hope we can basically try to stay within the spending limits that we have set for ourselves. The fact that we have a surplus seems to be an incentive to spend more money for whatever is there. And obviously we have to take a look at all kinds of issues. But we ought to really take a look at that surplus. Where does it belong? It seems to me that the surplus very clearly needs to be set aside. The money that goes to Social Security ought to be left in Social Security.

I think we have to certainly fund adequately those things that we determine are legitimate activities of the Federal Government. I think then we ought to really address ourselves to paying down the debt. I hope we will take a look at paying down the debt the way all of us take a look at home mortgages, and say we have—whatever it is—\$3 trillion of publicly held debt that we want to pay off. Let's set it up to pay it off in 15 years. It takes so much every year, and that is part of budgeting. If we just say we will pay it off whenever we get a good opportunity, it never happens. I hope we can continue that effort.

Finally, there is, hopefully, money left from that surplus. That ought to go back to the people who paid it. We ought not to be asking taxpayers to pay in more money than really is necessary to perform the functions of government. It ought to be spent in the private sector so we can continue this fairly prosperous society.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ELIZABETH HANAHAN OLIVER

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, Elizabeth Hanahan Oliver was born in Rocky Mount, NC and grew up in Washington, DC where she graduated from George Washington University.

"Beth" Shotwell, as she was known during much of the time that she

worked on Capitol Hill, began her employment in the office of Representative Horace R. Kornegay of North Carolina in the early 1960's. She then joined the staff of Senator Mike Mansfield, later becoming Chief Clerk of the Democratic Policy Committee. She served in that post through the terms of three Democratic Majority Leaders, Senator Mansfield, myself, and Senator George Mitchell. After her marriage to G. Scott Shotwell ended in divorce, she married former Secretary of the Senate, Francis R. "Frank" Valeo, in 1985.

In 1989, after 27 years of service to the Congress, Beth Shotwell retired. This year on September 22, she passed away at her home in Chevy Chase, Maryland. She had been battling cancer for several years.

"Beth" Shotwell Valeo was an excellent employee of the Senate. She was a dependable, reliable asset to the members of this body. Her staff loved her and worked hard under her direction. "Beth" relished her work and she revered the Senate.

She was probably proudest of her contribution to the Commission on the Operation of the Senate, and the efficiency that the recommendations of that Commission brought to this institution. Beth also had a large hand in computerizing the compilation of members' voting records, an innovation which has helped Members and staff immeasurably.

On the personal side, Beth was a lover of life with varied interests and a curious intellect. She appreciated music. She liked to needlepoint. She often rescued homeless animals. What a noble person. She enjoyed boating. She liked scuba diving, and she delighted in travel.

I shall always remember her as a tall, attractive woman, who seemed disciplined, polite, and very dedicated to her work in the Senate. In her life and in her work she was the best of the best. I was shocked and saddened to hear of her passing at far too young an age. My wife and I extend our deepest condolences to her daughters Rebecca and Abigail, her two sisters Abbie Smith and Ann Duskin, her brother Skip Oliver, Jr. of Fairfax Station, and her husband Frank.

In this autumn time of falling leaves, some words from Robert Frost come to mind:

Nature's first green is gold,
Her hardest hue to hold.
Her early leaf's a flower;
But only so an hour.
Then leaf subsides to leaf.
So Eden sank to grief,
So dawn goes down to day.
Nothing gold can stay.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.